

# 2025 Heartbreaker Cup Competition Rules

We are using **slightly modified Futsal** rules.

- It is likely that very few players, coaches, or fans are familiar with Futsal rules, so know when it is appropriate to use a softer approach on enforcing Futsal-specific rules.

## 1. Tournament Objectives

### 1. Safety

1. The primary goal of the referees is to maintain a safe environment. Use your best judgment when it comes to what you believe is unfair and use whatever tools are necessary (talking to players, fouls, Yellow or Red Cards, etc) to keep the games safe.

### 2. Fun

1. Soccer is fun, both playing and reffing, and we should seek to understand how our involvement in safe matches can impact a fun atmosphere. If the players are having fun and being safe, then our job is mostly done already. Use your involvement to assist the teams in creating a fun environment.

### 3. Fairness

1. Not all matches will be between teams of equal skill. Often matches that are between unbalanced teams will require extra work on our part to keep the match safe, fun, and fair. Remember, teams that are playing unfairly often have a negative impact on fun and safety.

## 2. The Playing Area and Penalty Area

1. All gyms will use the normal basketball court boundary. **Meadow Hill** uses the outer blue lines
2. The penalty area will be the 3-point arc that is painted on the courts.
  1. Only fouls committed inside this area will be considered penalties.
  2. The goalkeeper may legally handle the ball anywhere inside this area.
3. This means that the goalkeeper can pick up more balls, however it also means that there may be more penalties.

## 3. Goals

1. Movable goals will be used, and will likely need to be reset frequently.
2. Deliberately moving a goal should always result in a Yellow Card and an DFK
3. If the goal is moved, and the ball passes where the referee believes the goal would have been, the goal should be awarded.

## 4. Balls

1. Balls should be provided by the tournament organizers. Referees, please keep track of your ball and hand it off to the next referee or the tournament organizers.
  1. Only use Futsal approved balls.

## 5. Match Lengths

1. Two (2) 20 minute halves, with a 5 minute half time. The clock remains running unless an unusual situation occurs (ie. severe injury/spectator removal, etc);
2. Each team is awarded a 1 minute time out, in each half;
3. There is no extra time, when the 20 minutes is up, the match ends, regardless of where the location of the ball.
4. Matches **MUST start on time.**

## 6. Players

1. Teams play with 5 players, 1 of which is a designated Goalkeeper and wearing a different color or pinnie.
2. Teams may play with as few as 3 players.
3. If a team does not have 3 players 5 minutes after the designated start of the match, then the match will be considered to be forfeited. Referees will report this to the site administration.
4. Referees will not check in players
5. Players must have safe shoes, and shin guards. All other MYSA policies regarding jewelry, etc must be followed.
  1. Exemptions to the equipment rules may only be made by Tournament Director, Chris Essman.

## 7. Offside

1. There is NO Offside in Futsal.

## 8. Kick-in

1. **There are no throw-ins.** When a ball goes out of play on the touch lines (side-lines) then play is restarted by the team awarded possession kicking a stationary ball. It must be:
  1. Stationary;
  2. On the boundary line where it went out;
    1. This needs to be pretty precise, as teams may try to take advantage of the opponents being out of position to get the ball into play quickly.
    2. Taking a kick-in that is NOT on the boundary line, or not from the correct location results in an IFK to the opponents.
      1. It is recommended that referees publicly warn a team the first time that they violate this rule.
  3. Opponents must be 5 yards away
  4. Put into play within 4 seconds of when the referee signals that it is ready to be put back into play
  5. Kicked and clearly move;
  6. Touched by another player before the kicker can play it again.

## 9. Drop Ball

1. When play is stopped for by the referee and a rule has not been broken, restart with a drop ball
  1. Drop balls are usually because the ball has struck the referee, outside interference in the match (spectator, ball, etc), or to assess an injury.
  2. The ball is in play when it touches the ground;
  3. Drop Ball rules are the same as outdoor soccer.

## 10. Fouls

1. **Fouls are similar to outdoor football**, but pay particular attention to challenges that knock a player to the floor.
  1. The likelihood of injury is higher because of the gym floor, so work to discourage challenges that lead to players falling uncontrolled onto the gym floor.
2. Team Fouls
  1. Accumulated Team fouls are not being tracked for this tournament

3. Direct Free Kick fouls:
  1. Biting/spiting
  2. Throwing or kicking objects
  3. Deliberately moving the goal
  4. Handling the ball
  5. charge
  6. Jumps at
  7. kick or attempt to kick
  8. pushes
  9. strikes or attempts to strike (including head butting)
  10. tackles
  11. Trip or attempt to kick
  12. Holding
  13. Impeding or Obstruction
    1. Blocking similar to basketball is allowed, however the blocking player must be stationary and the other player must have had a chance to avoid the block.

## **11. Free Kicks**

1. Most fouls result in a DFK (**Direct Free Kick**)
  1. If there is contact between the players, then it will be a DKF
  2. If there is not contact (verbal infractions usually) then the kick is Indirect and may not be directly scored from the kick without touching any other player on the field, including the opponents goalkeeper
2. **Penalties**
  1. For fouls inside the penalty area that result in a Direct Free Kick, a penalty is awarded
    1. Penalties are taken from the Free Throw Line.
  2. Players must remain at least 5 Yards from the ball and behind the Penalty Area Lines
  3. Feinting during the run up is allowed, however the kicker must not pause once they have reached the ball. The penalty for an illegal feint is a YC and IFK to the opponents.
3. **Corner Kicks**
  1. Corner Kicks are similar to outdoor soccer.
  2. Corner kicks must be taken within 4 seconds of the referee signaling that it is ready to be put into play.

## **12. Indirect Free Kicks (IFK)**

1. IFKs that are awarded inside the penalty area shall be taken from the nearest boundary of the penalty area.
  1. Kick-ins
  2. Violating the 4-second rule
  3. Extra player on court (usually a sub) who gets hit by the ball.
  4. Playing in a dangerous manner (without contact) (usually high kicks)
  5. Dissent or other verbal offenses such as public swearing
  6. Preventing the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball
  7. Preventing the opponents from taking a free kick
  8. Goalkeeper holding the ball for longer than 4 seconds
  9. Goalkeeper picking the ball up in the penalty area after being intentionally kicked to them by a teammate

10. Goalkeeper picking the ball up in the penalty area after receiving a throw-in

### 13. Goal Clearance (Replaces Goal Kicks)

1. Opponents must leave the Penalty Area after the GK has gained possession of the ball
  1. The GK may choose to pass or drop the ball before that has happened, and the defending team is not penalized in that case.
2. Punting or Drop kicking the ball is NOT allowed.
3. Goal Kicks are NOT allowed.
4. Futsal recommends that ball be released from the hands of the Goalkeeper to a teammate either by rolling or throwing it to them.
5. The Ball may be dropped by the Goalkeeper to their own feet and **passed to a team mate or dribbled**, however, as soon as the GK drops the ball to their feet, opponents may challenge the for it.
6. The ball may be thrown to a team mate anywhere on the court, including **OVER** the half way line
7. A goal may not be scored by directly throwing it into the opponents goal

### 14. Cautions and Red Cards

1. Follow procedures for outdoor play
2. Record the names of players, coaches, or substitutes for cautions and red cards, and report them to the administration at your site.
3. Players
  1. A player that receives a red card may no longer participate in the match, and must leave the team area. They may remain in the gymnasium as a spectator, however they must not interfere with the match, including verbally.
4. Coaches
  1. Coaches that receive a red card are required to leave the technical area and may no longer participate in the match, including verbally, or with electronic communication.
    1. Many teams only have 1 coach, so if a coach is dismissed (Red Card) and no other coach is available, the coach **MUST** remain on the spectator side, and a parent may step in as coach.
    2. If there is no assistant coach, the coach must remain in order to oversee the team and players in accordance with SafeSport and Safe and Healthy playing environments.

### 15.4 second Rule

1. The ball must **ALWAYS** be put into play within 4 seconds of the ball being set at the correct location, or players leaving the penalty area, or any other similar circumstances.
  1. Teams may choose to play quickly, and are responsible for following proper restart procedures. Failure to do so results in an IFK to the other team.
    1. Balls must be stationary, so a team that attempts to kick quickly but kicks a moving ball are **NOT** penalized, and must restart the ball again. (Referees should be lenient, realizing that some of these rules may be new to the participants of the tournament)
2. Teams do **NOT** need to wait for the referee to signal that the ball is ready to be put into play, and may play quickly to take advantage of a tactical situation
3. The referee has the choice to require a team to wait until they are ready, in the event that they have an issue they need to deal with.
4. Referees should not be extremely strict with their interpretation of the 4-second rule, but should strive to keep the game flowing quickly, and limit time wasting.

5. The referee **MUST raise 1 arm** and count off the 4 seconds with fingers as a visual sign to the players, teams, and spectators. Please adhere to this spirit of this rule, but remember it is up to the referee when the ball is ready for a proper restart.

## 16. Substitutions

1. The match does not stop for substitutions. Any player may sub for any player without the permission of the referee, at any time.
2. Players must leave the court either at the half line, or the boundary line in front of their team bench.
  1. Players who are entering **must NOT enter** until the other player has left the field of play
3. Having too many players on the field at the same time will result in an IFK to the opponents, from the location of where the extra player entered the field of play
4. Players may NOT leave the field of play from any location other than the half line or the boundary line in front of their own team bench.
5. Players who are injured, may leave at any point at the discretion of the referee, **as long as the ball is not in play**.
6. Referees are encouraged to recognize trivial infractions of this rule, and merely remind the teams at the next stoppage of play.
7. If a team gains an advantage from any player entering the field of play early or the additional player interferes with play in any way, then it should ALWAYS be punished with a DFK.

## 17. Time Outs

1. Each team gets 1 time out per half.
  1. Time outs are granted when the referee signals that there is a time out. This is the only time the clock must be stopped.
  2. Time outs should last exactly 60 seconds. At the end of 60 seconds, the team in possession must follow the 4-second rule.
  3. Team officials must make a verbal or visual signal to the referee that they wish to have their time out;
  4. Teams must be in possession of the ball;
  5. Players may leave the pitch to get water or coaching;
  6. Substitutions are allowed during the time out;
  7. Restarting after a time out should be a kick-in, drop ball, DFK, IFK, or goal clearance depending on where the ball was when the time out occurred. If you don't know, and the players cannot decide, start the ball with the team's Goalkeeper.

## 18. Spectators

1. Spectators should remember that their goal is to cheer on and encourage the teams, while remaining positive role models for all those around them.
  1. Spectators can have a significant impact on the safety, fun, and fairness of a match.
  2. Issues with spectators should be directed to the site administration
    1. Referees are strongly discouraged from engaging with spectators.
  3. Time should not be added on to a match, if it is disrupted by a spectator.
    1. If the spectators cause any significant disruptions to a match, report it to the Site Administration and let the tournament director make any decisions they deem appropriate.

## 19. Referee Procedures

1. Please arrive to the match location at least 15 minutes before the start of the match.
2. Please have a pair of dry and clean shoes to wear while reffing. This helps keep the environment safe.
3. Referees should dress professionally, which includes a jersey if available, and black shorts and socks.
4. Please bring at least 2 different colors of shirts or jerseys, as the colors of the teams can vary wildly.
5. Referees are NOT responsible for checking in teams
  1. Many players may not have numbers visible. This is OK! In the event of misconduct, please take the name of the player for your report.
6. Referees **must stand on the spectator side** of the field in order to manage the substitutions
7. Games may end in a tie, except for championships.
8. It is recommended to recruit a spectator to keep track of the score boards.
  1. Ultimately the referee is responsible for the accuracy of the score
  2. Report the score of each game to the site administrator.
9. Penalty Shootout (Kicks From The Penalty Mark) (**Championship ONLY**)
  1. Games that require a winner will follow a penalty shoot out procedures if tied at the end of the game.
    1. Each team will take 5 kicks.
    2. Any 5 kickers may kick from eligible players.
    3. If a team has less than 5 players, then the other team may choose to reduce their number to equal the other team.
    4. If still tied after 5 kicks, then it goes to sudden death.
    5. If every eligible kicker has taken a kick, then players may take a second kick. No player may make an additional kick until every player has kicked an equal number of times.

## 20. Referee Abuse

1. Referee Abuse is a serious problem in youth sports and should not be tolerated in any form.
2. Many referees for this tournament will be youth referees and many will be new referees. It is totally acceptable for a referee to have a limited understanding of all of the rule complexities of the game. Many referees are new to the specifics for Futsal.
3. Referees work their hardest to become certified and work to improve their understanding of the game and to apply what they have learned in a consistent way to facilitate a safe, fun, and fair match.
4. Certified Referee Coaches and Mentors should be the only individuals coaching, correcting, or mentoring any of the referees that are working at this tournament.
  1. If you have specific issues that you believe need addressed, please contact the site administrators or find one of the USSF Certified Referee Coaches or Mentors that will be present at this tournament. It is never appropriate to approach the referee directly before, during, or after a match.
    1. Please contact Devin Harbour, Referee Coach, with any issues regarding referees.
      1. [devin@mtsra.org](mailto:devin@mtsra.org)
5. Abusive behavior towards referees may be reported to MYSA in accordance with MYSA and US Youth Soccer policies and be subject to MYSA's new 3-strikes Policy.

6. Abusive behavior towards a youth referee may be referred to MYSA or law enforcement in accordance with MYSA and US Youth Soccer policies.